

Representations of Masculinity: A Critical Discourse Analysis of Framing Violence Positively

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Abstract

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA henceforth) is applied in this study to examine the representation of masculinity and the positive framing of male violence in social media comments, specifically YouTube comments, in an Eastern society. The study investigates how language is used to normalize and positively justify male violence while consistently shifting blame and putting guilt onto female victims. It also investigates how gendered narratives of masculine culture shape perceptions of violence and victimization. Through an analysis of ten comments, the study identifies two primary patterns: (1) the framing of male violence as justifiable, often by portraying the female victim as responsible or deserving of the violence, and (2) the emotional bias in victim-blaming narratives that position women as responsible for the violence occurred to them. The findings reveal a broader cultural bias in favor of masculinity. The findings are reached by conducting a linguistic analysis and an ideological one in a form of discussion. Those are done adopting: Fairclough's (1995) three-dimensional approach, Halliday and Mathiessen's (1985) Systemic Functional linguistics (SFL), Goffman's (1974) concept of frame and Entman's (1993) concept of selection and salience framing.

Keywords: CDA, Gender, Masculinity, Framing, YouTube

1. Introduction

CDA is a well-established methodological direction adopted to explore and illustrate how language reflects, promotes, sustains, and even challenges relations of power in a society (Van Dijk, 2003:20). In the context of this study, CDA is particularly relevant as it allows for an in-depth investigation and exploration of how language constructs and sustains power dynamics and relations in digital spaces, such as YouTube comments. This study applies CDA to explore how discourse on YouTube reflects and shapes gendered power relations, particularly focusing on male/masculine violence in Eastern societies. By examining these comments, the study aims to highlight how gender representations in digital platforms contribute to societal perceptions of violence and victimization.

The study problem lies in the common tendency to normalize, sympathize, and even justify male violence, while consistently blaming female victims. The central aim of this research is to explore how masculinity is constructed through discourse in YouTube comments, and how this discourse contributes to the positive framing of male violence. To achieve this, the study critically analyzes selected comments on a case of female murder, focusing on how the comments work to positively frame male-related violence, minimize guilt and responsibility, and victimize women. The analysis is conducted through Fairclough's (1995) three-dimensional approach, Halliday and Mathiessen's (1985)

Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), Goffman's (1974) concept of frame, and Entman's (1993) concept of selection and salience framing.

While existing literature on gendered discourse and violence often focuses on news media, there is a gap in the critical examination of gender narratives in user content, especially in the context of YouTube comments. This study addresses this gap by analyzing how online discourse may reinforce or challenge patriarchal ideologies through the framing of male violence and the victimization of women. The study sheds light on how gendered imbalances in power are perpetuated in these digital spaces, contributing to the reinforcement of patriarchal structures.

The study hypothesizes that: (i) male violence is often positively framed as justifiable or excusable, (ii) female victims are portrayed as either responsible for the violence committed against them or deserving, and (iii) the positive framings of male violence and masculinity preference perpetuate gendered imbalances in societies, further reinforcing patriarchal ideologies.

2. Critical and Critical Discourse Analysis

The core term in Critical Discourse analysis is "critical". Critical is a term that has been investigated in various ways with regards to the use of language and the autocracy of power in societies. This makes it a concept especially crucial to studies of power, resistance, hegemony and ideology in various disciplines of language. Locke (2004) defines "critical" as a habit by which a situation, a person or an object is evaluated in respect to set of defined rules, values and principles. Critical, as Wodak (2001) claims, is not used in its negative sense in CDA. It is not merely a matter of criticizing; it is rather a matter of warning others on observing and thinking critically when it comes to public issues, i.e. without easily accepting things as taken for granted. So, the term critical stands for skepticism rather than negativity, i.e. it pushes a person to be a skeptical reader or listener.

Roger (2004:3) asserts that within any critical study or approach, the analysts must only aim to "disclose power dynamics and demonstrate inequalities embedded in society". Therefore, Van Dijk (1998) defines critical discourse analysis's tendency as investigating power relations in discourses. This means that an analyst working on CDA study is supposed to focus on uncovering any sort of discrimination, bias and inequality established throughout the use of language. As a result, dominance and hegemony of a group over another are supposed to be made obvious.

3. Gender Bias and Masculine culture

Studies discuss the fact that bias can sometimes be explicit and other times implicit. Explicit bias is the overtly expressed inaccuracy, inequality, and prejudice in the language used. Explicit bias or prejudice is the direct negative addressing or viewpoint against some people who are considered out-groupers.

Implicit bias is the association made against something or some individuals without awareness, i.e. automatically. It is to establish a negative view or reaction or action unconsciously (Dovidio and Gaertner, 2010). In simple words, the difference between explicit and implicit bias lies in whether an individual's conscious is aware or unaware of the action.

Fiske (1998) confirms, personal and group identities are shaped by the social groups that people belong to and those who do not belong to the same social group of certain individual are considered out-groupers. People mostly show bias against those out-groupers by several means such as developing stereotypes, showing emotional prejudice and even behavioral ones. Therefore, studies on stereotype bias, for instance, focus on uncovering all sorts of bias established whether implicitly or explicitly.

One form of bias can result from a culture that favors masculinity. An interesting concept approached within studies of gender ideology is the concept of "masculine culture". Cheryan et al (2016:6) describe the concept as everything that relates to gender in societies (such as beliefs, attitudes, responsibilities, norms, values and structures) that result in contributing less rights, values and roles to women in those societies. That is, the concept reflects the traditional thoughts and beliefs that make men see women and women feel themselves less important and successful. The concept discusses stereotypes about women that make them appear as incompatible with men in all aspects of life. Furthermore, the approach suggests that negative gender ideologies are mostly spread in societies where men are the dominant group.

It is suffice to mention that with regards to gender ideologies Apfelbaum et al (2006:1-2) assert that gender inequality, as a kind of social issue and ideology, can be established in terms of two levels. Those are:

- (i) The macro level of gender in/equality: this level covers the actual institutions and laws that seek to ensure equal rights to men and women in educations, careers, and all the aspects of life.
- (ii) The micro level of gender in/equality: this level deals with the personal and family spheres. On family level, things such as distributing the household responsibilities and other home responsibilities reflect in the overall conventions established in societies about gender equality. On personal level, a study by *Ferguson et al.* (2016) found that female gamers on Twitch, a digital platform for gamers, received more harassment than their male counterparts, with comments often focusing on their gender or sexual attractiveness, rather than their skills. This reflects micro-level bias in digital interactions.

Accordingly, gender ideologies and gender equality issues can be resolved only if both levels are reconstructed. However, the changing that might occur in the two spheres (the macro and the micro) do not necessarily go hand in hand. Yet, no single sphere is less important than the other. Studies show that gender inequality and violence issues are directly

related to the way these two spheres work, which are mostly constructed via languages and discourses. On discourses, Fairclough (1992:67) argues that discourses, and media discourse in specific, are ideological practices. They construct, change, naturalize and maintain world significations with regards to power relations.

Another distinctive term discussed in relation to gender ideologies is the concept of “gender equity”. It refers to “fairness of treatment for women and men according to their respective needs”. The fairness refers to is necessarily equivalent but not always equal. So, gender equity discusses the necessity of having equivalent roles, rights, opportunities, obligations and values by women rather than merely equal ones. The concept takes the respective needs of each gender into consideration in defining the rights and the obligations given to each of them. This concept is clearly different from both gender equality and gender ideology. Gender equality deals in a straightforward way with the outcomes of what each gender takes and gives in societies and judges them equally. Gender ideology, on the other hand, has nothing to do with mere equality or equity; it covers both the positive and the negative attitudes on gender.

4. Theories Adopted

In this study, two sets of theories are adopted. The first set, on the one hand, is related to framing theories. In this regard, two theories are precisely tackled. Those are Goffman’s (1974) concept of frame and Entman’s (1993) concept of Selection and Salience theory of framing. The second set, on the other hand, covers critical discourse analysis theories. Two main theories are adopted: Fairclough’s three dimensional approach and selected Halliday and Mathiessen’s (1985) Systemic Functional linguistics tools.

4.1. Framing Theories

Erving Goffman (1974), in a book entitled "Frame Analysis: An Essay on the Organization of Experience", coins the notion of "framing". He defines “framing” as a means to understand the way individuals or/and groups make sense of their social experiences. Goffman (ibid) explains that a “frame” is a pattern or a set of patterns of understanding and interpretation that allow language users to locate, identify, perceive, establish and label a social issue and its occurrences.

Framing theories establish the idea that the way things presented (framed) to specific audience influences the interpretations and the choices that people make about that information. So, frames are the organized and/or structured meanings with regard to a social issue or group covered (Bateson, 1972:197). In other words, framing means to “draw attention to certain attributes of the objects of news coverage, as well as to the objects themselves” (Goffman, 1974).

Within the realm of media discourse studies, Robert Entman, in 1993, presents a widely used concept of framing theory. In his theory, framing is defined as the process of making certain aspects of societies more salient in a text or discourse, such as media discourses. This process is done by highlighting certain elements, events, or characters and

downplaying some others in an objective way. This form or conceptualization of framing is specifically called “**Selection and Salience**” framing theory. The view of framing as selection and salience is the most often cited theory of framing. It reads as:

To frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described. Typically frames diagnose, evaluate, and prescribe... (Entman, 1993: 52)

4.2. Critical Discourse Analysis Theories

Fairclough is one of the prominent figures in the field of CDA. He brings the thoughts of Lancaster school into the field of CDA. CDA, according to Fairclough (1995), is an interdisciplinary field of study. It is also a problem-oriented field that seeks investigating ideological implication with regards to social as well as political discourses. He therefore believes that languages are the means by which power and ideological relations are established and sustained. (ibid)

In his three-dimensional approach, Fairclough (1995) emphasizes that the purpose that CDA seeks to achieve is to explore systematically any relationship of victims within discourses. That is, it explores how a group takes over another in certain social environment. (ibid)

Fairclough's (1995) three dimensional approach consists of three complementary stages. Those stages are: description (textual analysis), interpretation (discursive practice) and explanation (social practice). The formal elements of the texts such as transitivity, lexical choices, mood and modality are investigated in the first stage. Fairclough (1992:139) states that the first stage of analysis helps people to be aware on the way certain linguistic choices can reveal the bias on coverage. Also, it shows people how those choices work on naturalizing and imposing ideas of the addressers on the addressees. Further, the relationship between the production and the consumption of a discourse and the discourse itself is covered in the second stage. That is, the second stage goes beyond a mere linguistic analysis. The final stage refers to the contextual and historical dimensions of the discourse. In this stage, the unrevealed details of the discourses under investigation, specifically those related to power and ideology, are uncovered on the base of investigating two sorts of contexts. Those are: the institutional context and the social context of the text (Fairclough, 1995:).

To accurately establish the textual analysis in Fairclough's (1995) first stage, it has become a defined tradition to select linguistic tools from Halliday and Mathiessen (1985) as toolkit for analysis, such as transitivity, lexical choices, mood and modality as mentioned earlier. Chouliaraki and Fairclough (1999:134) assert the commonalities of perspective between SFL and CDA stating that "SFL theorizes Language in a way which harmonizes far more with the perspectives of critical social science than the other theories of language". Therefore, the following study follows the same step and takes the tools from SFL.

5. Data Collection

Data selected for this study involves ten comments made on a video shared on YouTube. The video covers the story of an Eastern lady, Nayera, being murdered by one of her male friends. Nayera Ashraf, an Egyptian lady, is a victim of gruesome murder. She is a 21-year-old college student. She was brutally attacked in Egypt's northern city of Mansoura. She was beaten and stabbed multiple times by Adel, her colleague, who ultimately slit her throat, tragically ending her life. According to local media reports, Nayera was about to enter her university when the attack occurred. Shocking footage of the incident shows her fighting for her life on the ground as bystanders attempt to intervene, while the assailant brandishes his knife before committing the fatal act. "It later emerged that Nayera had rejected a marriage proposal from her attacker. The assailant was quickly apprehended, and Egypt's public prosecutor charged him with premeditated murder. Prosecutors cited threatening messages found on Nayera's phone from the assailant as evidence".

The ten comments, on the one hand, are selected based on the recurring patterns in their meaning and ideology. The video, on the other hand, is randomly chosen with only taking into consideration the brutality of the story. A brutal and an unjustifiable story is chosen to establish the required expectations for this critical study, namely that people should stand against such an action and never accept excuses. That is, in normal cases, it is not supposed to undermine the brutality of a murder and a murderer.

The selected ten comments are going to be first analysed linguistically. The linguistic analysis will rely on: Fairclough's textual analysis, selected linguistic tools from SFL- namely transitivity, lexical choices, mood and modality, and theories of framing. Findings of the linguistic analysis will be reconsidered alongside with the social and historical contexts to establish a discussion of masculinity representation and the positive representation of male-related violence.

6. Textual Analysis

1.

Slang Arabic	Transliteration	Translation
انا من الناس الي ماحب اتابع قضايا القتل لكن ذي القضية جدا شدتني احسن ان فيه دوافع لذلك	ana mina alnāʿasi alā maʾaḥb aṭab ʿ qaḍāyā alqafli lakinā dhī alqaḍiātī jidaʿa shadatnī auḥsinā ana fīhi dawāfiʿa lidḥalika	I don't usually like to follow murder news, but this case has caught my attention. I feel there are motives behind it

The first part of the comment is just a general thought related to the commenter. She tries to make herself more reliable and trustworthy before presenting her own point of view about the story, the murder! She explains that the case seems very interesting to her and she couldn't handle not following it and commenting. She then goes on to implicitly indicate that she does not want to blame the murder! However, she explicitly justifies why she does not want to blame the murderer. The reason that she utilizes to interpret and justify the murder case is presented via a mental process, i.e. what she feels. The commenter asserts

that the circumstance indicates the essentiality of motive existence. The contradiction in seeking motive and justification in a context where brutality is so obvious reveals a hidden bias against women and an obvious masculinity preference. Such a presence makes commenters opt to frame a violence positively.

The essential lexical choices in this comment are “like”, “follow”, “caught”, “attention” and “feel”. The use of these lexis shows how little sympathy the commenter has towards the victim, Nayera, although the video is so brutal. This also indicates an obvious masculinity support. Further, the use of “feel” alongside with “motive” shows that her comment is nothing but a hypothetical assumption yet effort is made to frame it as a factual one!

The mood is declarative. The commenter declares an opinion. She implicitly asserts that she has no solid evidence for her assumption but she follows her sense which reflects her subjective stance.

2.

Slang Arabic	Transliteration	Translation
لا بد فيه سبب للقتل	laḅd fih sabab liḷqaṭl	There must be a reason for the killing

Transitivity in this comment highlights a verbal process, i.e. an opinion about the killing and its reason. The commenter explicitly indicates that for a killing to happen, a reason is required. The reason is usually a motive. However, trying to find a motive in such an assertive and certain language is an implicit way to find justifications for the circumstances that surrounds the killer, i.e. the killing act. By doing so, a tendency to justify masculinity and their violent actions becomes obvious. There is also the cause circumstance here. It is the means by which the commenter emphasizes the cause-effect scenario to reframe the incident in a justified way.

The lexical item “a reason” is used as a collocation to “killing” as a way to seek justification. Further, the use of the modality “must” is a form of necessity, i.e. a necessity of existing a motive. These implications are represented via a declarative mood.

3.

Slang Arabic	Transliteration	Translation
العلاقات الغير شرعية حرام ونائجها ديمّا تنتهي بجرمة	al'alāqāt alghuḥyr shurā'īā ḥarām wntayjha dymā taṇtahī bijaṛīma	The illegitimate relationships are forbidden (haram), and their consequences always end in a crime

Transitivity analysis indicates the employment of actional process in the above comment. It also puts forward a case circumstance throughout a hypothetical cause-effect relationship or scenario. It further generalizes the idea to make it look like ultimate result. In

other words, it indicates that any relationship other than the one socially and religiously defined as acceptable ends with a crime. This process and/ or circumstance leads to put the actor, those girls who get engaged in an illegitimate relations, including Nayera, in the accused position. That is, the actor is held part of the responsibility for being in a relationship that inevitably leads to criminal acts. This scenario frames victim women as responsible as long as the accused is a masculine character.

With regard to lexical choice, the use of the word “illegitimate – from a religious point of view”- reveals that the commenter has classified relationships into two sorts, a kind that leads to positive consequences and a kind that lead to negative consequences. Consequently, the first one is acceptable while the second one, as it is described, is “forbidden”.

Another interesting lexis is the use of “always”. The use of always implicates two things. The first is an idea of generalization. This means that the ideology in the comment goes upon not only Nayera, but also any other girl within the Eastern society. The second is the inevitability of the assumption. The commenter decides that the outcome of such a process (forbidden relations) is inevitably a negative attribute (crime). The focus on the attitudes of the victim rather than the incident itself and framing them as justifications is an indication of a positive framing of violence in favor of masculinity.

The mood is declarative. It shows certainty in presenting the assumption. The assumption is a form of belief or factual assertion.

4.

Slang Arabic	Transliteration	Translation
<p>مالوم القاتل لان البنات اذا في شخص يجبهن تنغلا عليه وماتحس بمشاعره .. كفوو</p>	<p>maḷwm aḷqātīla lāna aḷbunāat aḍḥa fī shakḥs yuḥibūhā ttghlā ‘alayḥ w maṭhs bimashā‘irihi .. kfw</p>	<p>I don't blame the killer because when girls have someone who loves them, they become demanding and don't feel his emotions. Well done/ bravo!</p>

The process of transitivity used in this comment is a mental process. The commenter covers both his own mental process (what he feels towards the case) and the mental process of every girl, including Nayera. On the one hand, he attributes to himself the feeling of support and establishes understanding for the state of the killer by declaring that he does not blame the killer, which is an explicit positive framing of violence. On the other hand, he positions the actor, Nayera, in a negative circumstance, which is an obvious masculinity preference. He provides two circumstances in connection to the mental process of Nayera. The first is manner circumstance where the actor, Nayera, is described as demanding and careless. The second is a cause circumstance where the act of negligence and selfishness is defined as the cause of the incident. In other words, it is defined as a justification for the killing incident!

The lexical use explicitly positions Nayera as the one to be blamed while positions the attacker as the one deserves sympathy. Lexes used with relation to Nayera are “demanding”, and “don’t feel” whereas lexes used with relation to the killer are “love”, and “emotion”. Further, the use of the appraisal expressions “well done/ bravo” (كفوو- kfw) indicates the lack of sympathy towards the real victim.

The mood is declarative. It is form of opinion or point of view but it shows a high degree of approval and praise.

5.

Slang Arabic	Transliteration	Translation
للاسف حب من طرف واحد	llaṣf ḥub min ṭaraf wāḥid	Unfortunately, it's one-sided love

The process of transitivity established here is a verbal process. The commenter expresses personal point of view on the incident. The process attributes a positive quality to the incident, i.e. “one-sided love”. The positive sense in the comment shows that the commenter lacks sympathy towards the victim (positively frames the violent incident) and on top of that seeks justification for the killer.

The lexical choice of “love” goes against the brutality of the incident. Therefore, it implies lack of sympathy. Also, the use of “unfortunately” indicates a negative expectation of a “one-sided love”. The mood used also participates in communicating the non-sympathetic implication. The mood is declarative presenting an opinion in a form of assertion and a fact.

6.

Slang Arabic	Transliteration	Translation
الي وصل الولد للقتل ان هي استغلته فترة وسحبت عليه وهو كان عاطفي بزيادة وميعرفش انه تستغلوا نقهر الولد وفعل فعلته	ālī waṣl alwalad liḥqatī anā hīa aṣṭaghalāthū fafra wasaḥabat ‘alayh wahūa kān ‘atīfī bizīāda wmy‘rfsh aīnha taṣtaghilū naqharu alwalad wafa‘al fī latahu	The reason the boy resorted to murder is that she took advantage of him for a while and misled him. He was overly emotional and didn't realize he was being exploited. The boy got upset and did what he did.

Nayera, via transitivity language, is presented as the actor who establishes three actional processes. Those three actional processes are all negative: “take advantage”, “mislead” and “exploit”. Consequently, Nayera is presented as establishing two negative circumstances and processes. Those are: manner and cause. She is described as having bad manners, exploiting people and taking advantage of them. She is also described as being responsible of the negative emotional state of the murderer and subsequently of his violent action. The shift of guilt over the feminine victim is an indication of masculinity preference and a tendency for framing male-related violence incidents positively.

The process of transitivity that is used to explain the murderer's state is the mental process. The comment shows that the killer has gone through tough time which is what requires sympathy. This is another side of the effort made to frame male-related violence incidents positively.

The lexical choice also works on positioning the murderer as the victim and Nayera as the accused. Lexes used in relation to Nayera are: "took advantage", "mislead", "exploit" whereas lexes used in relation to the murderer are: "exploited", "emotional" and "upset". The lexes used to describe the state of the killer seek a kind of sympathy for the killer while the set of lexis used to describe Nayera aims to announce her as the guilty. The mood works in line with the main idea as well. It is declarative. It declares the viewpoint that the murderer's action is nothing but a reaction to emotional exploitation.

7.

Slang Arabic	Transliteration	Translation
لو كان احترمت نفسها وصانت قدرها ما يصيرش فيها هكا	laŵ kân aḥṭaramaṭ nafṣuhā waṣānaṭ qaḍruhā maṣṣyrsh fihā hakāa	If she had respected herself and preserved her dignity, this wouldn't have happened to her

The comment explicitly assigns responsibility to the victim. The transitivity process of action clarifies that. The commenter shows that the action of the actor, Nayera, is the reason to what she has been through, a murder. The process is connected to a condition cause circumstance. The circumstance is based on a hypothetical cause-effect relation. The conditional relation states that the kind of actions she has done (not respecting herself and not preserving her dignity) are the main cause of the effect, the murder. This structuring of transitivity clarifies the way the commenter asserts that the murderer is not the one to be blamed and the way the commenter tries to shift away the attention from the violent incident of murder by framing the meant-to-be causes as more prominent incidents.

Two interesting lexical items are found in this comment. Those are self-respect and dignity. The use of these lexes reveals the societal obligations assigned on women and the inheriting preference of masculinity.

The mood is declarative. It presents a perceived obligation required from women that contributes in defining their position in the society.

8.

Slang Arabic	Transliteration	Translation
اهلها تخلصو منها .. سيناريو فظيع لانها تسير في طريق مشبوه ليتخلصو من عارها فضربو عصفورين بحجارة واحدة وعادل الله يرحمه ضحية	āhlihā takhālūshū minhā .. sīnāryūu faẓī'u lānihā tasīr fī ẓarīq mashbūh lytkhlšw min 'ārihā faḍaḥbū 'aṣfūrayni biḥajāara wāḥida wa'ādili āllhi yarḥamuhu ḍaḥtā	Her family got rid of her... A terrible scenario because she was heading down a dangerous path, so they got rid of their shame. They killed two birds with one stone, and unfortunately, Allah rest his soul, he became a victim.

This comment shifts the blame on Nayera's family and consequently on her. The actor is, therefore, her family and her. The actional processes of her family are described as "get rid of her", "get rid of their shame" and "killed". The actional processes of Nayera are "heading down" and "shame". The circumstance that surrounds Nayera is negatively described. She is seen as being departed from the societal norms of their community and, thus, deserves what happened to her. As a consequence to that, her family are attributed with the negative circumstances described above. Thus, they are held responsible for her harmful experience.

Lexical choice in this comment is totally against the victim. She is described with lexes like "heading down" and "shame". The attacker, on the other hand, is defined by the lexical item "victim". So, blame is explicitly shifted. Further, The mood is declarative which shows that the commenter wants to sound like declaring a factual statement.

9.

Slang Arabic	Transliteration	Translation
تستاهل كل فتاة تقوم باستغلال الشباب وهكذا حوادث تسبب اضطرابات للشباب مما يجعله يفقد السيطرة على نفسه ويفكر بالانتقام.. المتهم الرئيسي في القضية هي نيرة	tstāhl kulū fatāt taqawūm biāištighlāl alshābāb wahakadhā ḥwādith tasabūb aiḍṭirābāt lilshābāb mimāa yaj' aluhu yafqidu alsāyṭara 'alay nafsah wayufakīr biālaintiqām .. almutāham alrāyysi fī alqadā hīa nayīrafu ⁿ	Every girl who exploits young men deserves killing. Such incidents cause disturbances among young men, leading them to lose control and contemplate revenge... The accused in this case is Nayera.

The analysis of transitivity figures out a sequence of cause-effect actions. The action process attributed to Nayera is a negative one, namely "exploits". The circumstance surrounds the action is the consequences that it results. The consequences, which are the mental processes of the murderer and his violent reaction, are the effect or the outcome of the cause. This sequence of cause-effect works on shifting the blame on the victim and framing the violent incident as a justifiable one. However, the commenter explicitly reveals

his point of view in the concluding sentence via an identification process: “the accused is Nayera”. Further, the structure of the transitivity does not only promote for hypothetical cause-effect scenario but also generalizes it on every girl in the same society that undergoes similar incident, which is another obvious tendency to masculine culture.

Lexical choice in this comment reveals the position of the commenter and the way he sees each participant, Nayera and the murderer. The lexes used in relation to Nayera are: “exploits”, “cause disturbance” and “deserves killing” whereas the lexes used in relation to the killer are: disturbed, “lose control” and “revenge”. The lexical items work on getting sympathy for the murderer and blaming the victim.

The mood is declarative. It as usual declares the personal point of view of the commenter and presents it as a certain fact.

10.

Slang Arabic	Transliteration	Translation
ذي سببها الانفتاح الزايد	dhī sababihā alainfitāḥa alzāʾayida	Excessive openness/freedom is the cause.

Transitivity analysis provides obvious clue on shifting responsibility and favoring masculinity. It reveals how Nayera’s behavior is stated as the main cause for the incident. This structuring positions her as the one responsible for the attack, i.e. the attack was a consequence for her behavior and her family’s negligence, carelessness and inadequate protection that resulted from over openness. Evaluative language is obvious in the lexical choices of this comment. The word “cause” reflects negative perspective on Nayera. Also, the use of the adjective “excessive” to highlight inappropriate behavior is another indication of shifting guilt and responsibility and favoring masculinity.

The mood is declarative. It declares a certainty in presenting judgments on Nayera and her behavior.

7. Discussion

The analysis of the ten comments above shows that eastern people often tend to normalize and positively frame male violence on social media even when the incident is clearly violent. The normalization of positive framing of male-violence is done by two means:

1. Framing male-violence as necessarily justifiable:

One of the most significant naturalized thinking and ideological implications figured out throughout the analysed comments is the consistent framing of male-related violence as justifiable and the consistent framing of female victimization as deserving. This pattern of thinking and viewing things achieved through the strategic utilization of language, as seen in the detailed analysis, which redirects responsibility and attention from the perpetrator (a male) to the victim (a female). This is usually done through the portrayal and coverage of women as guilty and provocative or even deserving of the violent fate. For example,

comments number 1,2,4,5,7, 8 and 9 redirect blame and responsibility entirely onto the female victim which is a scenario that constructs the narrative that the victim's attitude and behavior justifies her victimization and works as an excuse to tolerate the perpetrator, the male one. The redirection of the responsibility to come up with justifications is done by all the linguistic means possible, as the detailed analysis above shows, such as transitivity, lexical items and modality.

In addition to serving positive framing of male-related violence, this pattern of viewing gender related violence in Eastern society pictures any male perpetrator as a victim of various circumstances such as their emotional state, the actions and attitudes of the woman, or any form of societal pressure. In the comment number 6., for instance, which reads as “the reason the boy resorted to murder is that she took advantage of him for a while,” the language establishes a sympathetically justified portrayal of a killer! The sympathetic portrayal is done by focusing on the perceived claimed-exploitation and the killer’s emotional vulnerability.

2. Framing female victims as responsible for the incident:

A recurring style of shifting blame from the male perpetrator and framing female victims as responsible and guilty for the violent incidents they experience has been evident in the analysis of the ten comments. There seems to be a tendency to redirect the accountability to the victim which reflects a cultural bias in the favor of masculinity. Throughout the analysis of the comments, several mechanisms emerge that specifically help to position the victim as responsible and guilty for the incident, such as:

- In some comments (for instance 3 and 7), there is a direct or indirect suggestion that the victim's actions led to the incident, which is a scenario that makes female-victims “deserve” what happened to them.
- In some other comments such as in comment 6, focus is given to the victim's perceived or supposed flaws, such as being “demanding,” “careless,” “selfish,” or “exploiting” others, which in turn become justifications for violence
- Another common pattern is the portrayal of the male killer as a victim of emotional need and distress.
- Many comments, such as comment 10 that discusses excessive freedom, invoke cultural expectations and put them on women specifically as a way of justifying violence.

An essential and interesting frame in the comments is the emotional bias that has been made implicitly and explicitly obvious. Commenters from both gender show a low degree of sympathy with the female victim despite of the discussible brutality of the incident. In comment 1, for instance, the female commenter seems to be subconsciously comfortable and familiar with the idea of not being sympathetic to women victims unless it is proven that there is no hidden motive lead to her victimization. This is also seen in the other comments where the first thought that every commenter, male and female, establishes is that there should be something wrong with the female victim. This can reveal the fact the eastern society is a masculine culture where even women themselves find it difficult to be defined as real victims of male-violence.

Another evident masculinity preference and positive representation of male-related violence is seen in the selection and salience framing of the comments. In all the ten comments, the salient character is the victim. However, it is not her victimization that is selected to be portrayed or to be seen as the salient element of her character and story. It is rather the negative attitudes, behaviors and circumstances that can be related to her and which serve as excuses for her victimization. For instance:

- In comment 1 and 2, a shift in attention is explicitly made from the brutality of the incident to the necessity of justification existence.
- In comment 3, focus is given on the forbidden kind of relationship which is claimed that the victim had with the killer.
- In comment 4, focus is given to (a hypothetical) a reading of the victim's character which shows her as a demanding and careless person. This is also done in comment 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10 where the victim is negatively pictured.
- In comment 5, the overall shape of the story is changed by selecting the tiny detail of the story where the killer was once attacked to the victim.

Furthermore, selection and salience framing is another common means by which masculinity is served. The pattern of selection and salience shows that commenters consciously and subconsciously tend to, on the one hand, redirect the attention away from the murderer and his brutal action. On the other hand, the framings redirect the attention of the society towards digging deeper in the character of the victim to come up with attitudes and set of behaviour that justify the incident and shifts responsibility onto her.

Accordingly, the analysed comments and the discussions presented illustrate how exactly gender bias and societal norms in Eastern society lead to the negative framing of female victims as guilty for the violence occurred to them. Therefore, it is sufficient to refer that this framing, in turn, allows and promotes for the following: (i) the normalization of male-related violence, (ii) the reinforcement of patriarchal ideologies (masculine culture), (iii) shifting blame away from the perpetrators, and (iv) justifying the unjustifiable. These discussions not only reveal how the public perceives such relations and incidents but also highlight the necessity for a broader societal move toward gender equality and the rejection of positive framing of violence and victim-blaming narratives.

8. Conclusion

The findings of this study underscore and portray the deeply ingrained gender biases for the favor of masculinity present in Eastern society, where male-related violence is framed as necessarily justifiable while female victimization is highly minimized. The analysis of the ten comments has revealed a consistent pattern of redirecting responsibility and accountability away from perpetrators, namely a male one, onto female victims. This pattern serves to reinforce patriarchal norms and ideologies that favor masculinity and masculine culture. Throughout a strategic use of language, selection and salience framing and emotional bias, commenters consciously and subconsciously normalize male-related violence and excuse and justify brutal behaviors that result in gender inequality. The

implications of this study and its findings are far-reaching; the study findings uncover (i) how the public in eastern society perceives violence against women, and (ii) how societal expectations and norms shape and reshape the discourse on this regard.

The implications of this study extend far beyond the immediate findings. The findings of this study reinforce the utility of CDA as a field in uncovering hidden ideologies in social media interactions. Moreover, the study benefits gender studies by highlighting how masculine norms, often internalized by both men and women, influence the collective perceptions of victimization and violence. However, it is sufficient to indicate that this study, while insightful, is not without its limitations. One primary constraint is the small sample size which analyzed. While these comments represent a snapshot of social media discourse, they do not fully capture the range of opinions present in larger social media communities. So, future studies could broaden the sample size and include multiple social media platforms to provide a more comprehensive analysis.

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